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DE RUEHBO #3624 1382117  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 182117Z MAY 07  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5550  
INFO RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 7558  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 9007  
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ MAY LIMA 5075  
RUEHQD/AMEMBASSY QUITO 5695

UNCLAS BOGOTA 003624

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BRASILIA FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HUB/STORY

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [SENV](#) [ETRD](#) [CO](#)  
SUBJECT: COLOMBIA TO ACCEDE TO WHALING CONVENTION

¶1. (SBU) The GOC intends to accede to the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW). Ana Maria Hernandez, Director of International Affairs for the Environment Ministry, told EconCouns that the decision was made at a May 16 interagency meeting. Hernandez stated that the process will take some time given inter-agency procedural requirements and the necessity to attain Congressional and Constitutional Court approval. She estimates that accession will not be finalized for 1-1/2 to 2 years.

¶2. (SBU) Colombia will form part of the pro-conservation bloc in the International Whaling Commission (IWC). According to Foreign Minister Director of Economic, Social and Environmental Affairs Maria Andrea Alban, Colombia's principal interest in joining the IWC is to support the moratorium against whaling. Colombia has no whaling fleet or industry, Alban explained, but Colombian waters offer both a migratory path and breeding grounds. Whale watching forms part of GOC policy to promote ecotourism in Colombia, especially in the impoverished Pacific Coast region.

¶3. (SBU) Hernandez confirmed that upon accession to the ICRW, Colombia will be party to 5 of the 7 multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) singled out by administration and congressional officials as part of the new free trade agreements. She added that efforts to become a party to the two remaining accords -- the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Convention, and the Convention on Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources -- have been on-going but will intensify with the political momentum gained by the trade talks.

Drucker